

bill. Senator, I have your AM3508. (See page 1397 of the Legislative Journal.)

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Peterson, just before you start, I would like to introduce some guests of the Legislature first before you begin. We have some guests of Senator Morrissey. There are 20 eighth graders from Lewiston, Nebraska and their teacher, and they are in the south balcony. Would you folks please stand and be welcomed by the Legislature. Thank you for being with us. Senator Peterson.

SENATOR PETERSON: Mr. Speaker and members, I offer this amendment. With just introduction of the school children up there, this is in regards to you. My amendment makes it mandatory that we put seat belts in school buses. I think if we are going to protect everybody, I think this is a good amendment. This is offered to give children on school buses the same protection of seat belts that is given to the driver of the school bus. The life and protection of children should be as important to us as that of the bus driver. I have heard the argument that the reason children on school buses are not covered in this bill is because it would be too expensive. There are some estimates at \$2,500 on up on a bus. Certainly installing seat belts are an additional expense for everyone required to comply with it. The expense argument hasn't stopped us from requiring seat belts in other situations. Aren't the children worth the expense? That is the same argument used for getting more and more money for education. The lives of the children and their safety is as important as their education. If we determine that seat belts are needed to save lives and protect from serious injury, why do we deny that some protection, the same protection to school children? Are their lives and protection less important than others? And even if we haven't had a school bus accident in Nebraska just recently, that doesn't mean that there won't be one today or tomorrow with the weather like it is, or whenever a truck could hit a school bus, or go in the ditch and kill a bunch of children. The chances of loss of lives and serious injury are greater with school buses than for passenger cars because there are more people involved. I ask for you to pass this amendment and protect our children on school buses. Ask for the adoption of the amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Peterson. Senator Haberman, on the amendment. Senator Hefner, on the amendment. Senator